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Request for the inclusion of a supplementary sub-item in the agenda of the sixty-ninth session

No first placement of weapons in outer space

Note verbale dated 12 August 2014 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, has the honour to request the inclusion of a supplementary sub-item, entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space", under the item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" in the agenda of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum (see annex I) and a draft resolution (see annex II) on this subject are annexed hereto.

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation also has the honour to request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 12 September 2014.

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Annex I

[Original: English]

Explanatory memorandum

The Outer Space Treaty (1967) recognizes that the use and exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes is in the common interest of mankind. The Treaty establishes that space activities must be developed in conformity with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, aiming at the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of cooperation and mutual understanding.

While the Outer Space Treaty prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in outer space, the Treaty alone is not sufficient to fully regulate the issue, since it does not explicitly cover either conventional weapons or new technological advances.

Bearing in mind the wide range of possibilities offered by the use of outer space for the promotion of international social and economic development, there is, therefore, a legitimate concern with the possible placement of weapons in outer space.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament since 1985. In this regard, China and the Russian Federation jointly introduced in 2008 a proposal on a treaty for the consideration by the States members of the Conference on Disarmament (prohibition on the placement of weapons in outer space).

In the traditional preambular paragraphs of resolutions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the General Assembly has recognized that negotiations for the conclusion of an international agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space remain a priority task of the Conference on Disarmament and makes a special reference to "the introduction by China and the Russian Federation at the Conference" of the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space.

On 10 June 2014, an updated version of the treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space was submitted, reflecting proposals made by interested States, thus giving an additional impulse to further work on that draft treaty.

Taking into account the stalemate that hampers progress on the adoption of a programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, the issue remains unresolved.

On 5 October 2004, the Russian Federation, in its statement to the First Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, pledged that it would not be the first to place weapons of any kind in outer space and called upon all States to follow suit.

Since 2005, Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Brazil, Cuba, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan have formally adhered to a "no first placement" policy.

General Assembly resolution 68/50 on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities and the final report of the relevant group of governmental experts, both of which were adopted by consensus, take note of the efforts made by those States that are pursuing the "no first placement" policy.

We believe that the broadest possible international adherence to this policy will greatly contribute to strengthening international peace and security. Thus, understanding the urgency of further effective steps in this regard, we propose a draft resolution entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space" for consideration of the First Committee.

We believe that adoption of a resolution on "No first placement of weapons in outer space" would contribute to the globalization of the "no first placement" initiative, making it a truly universal political commitment.

The initiative itself could be seen as an interim step on the road to a legally binding instrument that would promote the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and strengthen security and predictability of outer space activities by preventing placement of weapons of any kind in outer space.

Annex II

[Original: English]

Draft resolution

No first placement of weapons in outer space

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the common interest of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of articles III and IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies of 27 January 1967,

Conscious that the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger to international peace and security,

Reaffirming that further measures should be examined in the search for agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space,

Also reaffirming its recognition that the legal regime applicable to outer space by itself does not guarantee prevention of an arms race in outer space and that there is a need to consolidate and reinforce that regime,

Noting, in this regard, the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, introduced by the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation at the Conference on Disarmament,[1]

Considering that transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities are an integral part of the draft treaty mentioned,

Recalling its previous resolutions, including resolutions 45/55B of 4 December 1990 and 48/74B of 16 December 1993, which, inter alia, confirm the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures as a means conducive to ensuring the attainment of the objective of the prevention of an arms race in outer space,

Noting the importance of political statements made by a number of States not to be the first to place weapons in outer space,[2]

1. *Reaffirms* the importance and urgency of the objective to prevent an arms race in outer space and the willingness of States to contribute to reaching this common goal;

2. *Reiterates* that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating forum, has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement, or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer

[1] See CD/1985.

[2] Armenia, Belarus, Brazil, Cuba, Indonesia, Russia and Sri Lanka.

space in all its aspects, and stresses that, while such agreements are not concluded, other measures may contribute to ensure that weapons are not placed in outer space;

3. *Urges* all States, especially space-faring nations, to consider the possibility of upholding a political obligation not to be the first to place weapons in outer space and making an appropriate public announcement;

4. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventieth session the item entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space".